

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02 DHA-02 /090 W

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R 091320Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3280

INFO AMEMBASSY CAPETOWN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, SHUM, SF, BR

SUBJECT: PARTICIPATION WITH SOUTH AFRICA IN ATLANTIC REGATTA

REF: (A) CAPE TOWN 0001 (NOTAL), (B) 75 BRASILIA 4850 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: BRAZILIAN-SOUTH AFRICAN FLAP OVER GOB'S WITHDRAWAL FROM
CAPETOWN-RIO JACHT RACE ENDED WHEN GOB REVERSED STAND ON GROUNDS
THAT RACE WOULD INCLUDE OTHER COUNTRIES AND INVOLVED MANY PARTICIPANTS

FROM "FRIENDLY NATIONS". IN LIGHT OF ANGOLA EVENTS, INCIDENT
BEING INTERPRETED HERE AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTRY
CONFUSION ON AFRICAN POLICY. INCIDENT ALSO POINTS UP SHARPENED
DILEMMA FOR BRAZIL RESULTING FROM CLASH BETWEEN INCREASED EMPHASIS
ON CLOSE RELATIONS WITH BLACK AFRICA ON ONE HAND AND STILL
IMPORTANT TRADE, AVIATION, AND SECURITY LINKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA
ON OTHER. END SUMMARY.

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1. A MINOR DIPLOMATIC INCIDENT AROSE ON DECEMBER 31, 1975,

WHEN THE GOB CONFIRMED TO SOUTH AFRICA ITS DECISION TO PROHIBIT BRAZILIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE UPCOMING ATLANTIC TRAINGULAR YACHT RACE AND DENY THE USE OF BRAZIL'S PORTS TO PARTICIPATING VESSELS. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS THE SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR, A.J. VILJOEN, LET IT BE KNOWN THAT HE HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF THE CANCELLATION FROM ITAMARATY (FOREIGN MINISTRY). THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT VILJOEN WOULD BE RECALLED TO PRETORIA FOR "CONSULTATION" AS A PROTEST. SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN MINISTER HILGARD MULLER WAS QUOTED AS CALLING THE BRAZILIAN ACTION "CURIOUS AND DISCONCERTING." FOLLOWING A SPECIAL NEW YEAR'S DAY MEETING BETWEEN VILJOEN AND BRAZILIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS AND (REPORTEDLY) A MYSTERIOUS PHONE CALL TO BRAZILIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA THE FOLLOWING EVENING, HOWEVER, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ANNOUNCED THAT IT HAD RECONSIDERED ITS DECISION AND WOULD PERMIT BRAZILIAN PARTICIPATION. THE DECISION, ITAMARATY EXPLAINED, WAS BASED ON THE LARGE NUMBER OF FOREIGN PARTICIPANTS FROM "FRIENDLY NATIONS" AND CLARIFICATION BY THE RIO YACHT CLUB THAT THE CAPETOWN-RIO VOYAGE IS ONLY A PORTION OF THE COURSE THAT BEGAN IN FRANCE AND WILL TERMINATE IN ENGLAND. VILJOEN PROCEEDED TO DECLARE THAT THERE WAS NO LONGER ANY REASON FOR HIM TO RETURN HOME FOR CONSULTATIONS, AND AS EVIDENCE THAT NO BREAK HAD OCCURRED, ITAMARATY MADE IT KNOWN THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN GRANTED TO VILJOEN'S SUCCESSOR.

2. BY WAY OF BACKGROUND, THE DIRECTOR OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE STATED IN THE PRESS THAT THE DECISION TO PROHIBIT BRAZILIAN PARTICIPATION WAS MADE "MONTHS AGO." AS PROOF HE CITED THAT NO BRAZILIAN YACHTSMEN HAD ENROLLED IN THE COMPETITION--A CLAIM DENIED BY SOURCES IN THE NATIONAL SPORTS COUNCIL, WHO SAID THAT IN OCTOBER 1975 TWO BRAZILIAN YACHTSMEN WERE AUTHORIZED TO JOIN THE COMPETITION.

3. FOLLOWING THE REGATTA IMBROGLIO, THERE WAS SOME PUBLIC CONFUSION OVER BRAZIL'S POLICY TOWARD SPORTS AND APARTHEID. BRAZILIAN NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THAT ALL NATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS HAD RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY NOT TO ACCEPT ANY INVITATIONS FROM SOUTH AFRICA. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE JORNAL DO BRASIL REPORTED THAT MINISTER SILVEIRA HAD STATED THAT THE PROHIBITION AGAINST ATHLETIC COMPETITION WOULD NOT BE APPLIED TO INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS, BUT ONLY TO BILATERAL EVENTS.

4. SUBSEQUENTLY, AN ITAMARATY STATEMENT DENIED THAT MINISTER SILVEIRA HAD MADE ANY DECLARATIONS TO THE PRESS CONCERNING SPORTS COMPETITION PROMOTED BY SOUTH AFRICA OR WITH SOUTH

AFRICAN PARTICIPANTS. THE JORNAL, BACKED BY AT LEAST ONE OTHER PAPER, REPORTED THAT THE MINISTER'S COMMENTS HAD INDEED BEEN MADE, DURING A PRIVATE COCTAIL PARTY CONVERSATION. (THE CLAIM WAS CONFIRMED IN CONFIDENCE TO EMBOFF BY ASSOCIATES OF THE MINISTER PRESENT AT THE SAME FUNCTION.)

5. A FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS TOLD EMBOFF THAT BRAZIL ANNOUNCED IN THE APPROPRIATE UN COMMITTEE LAST OCTOBER THAT, WITH RESPECT TO THE REGATTA, BRAZIL WOULD OBSERVE THE RESTRICTIONS ENJOINED IN THE UN RESOLUTION ON APARTHEID. THIS DECISION WAS NOT SPECIFICALLY COMMUNICATED TO SOUTH AFRICA BECAUSE , THE OFFICIAL EXPLAINED, BRAZIL TRIES TO KEEP MULTILATERAL ISSUES OUT OF BILATERAL CHANNELS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND DID NOT WANT TO APPEAR TO BE "RUBBING IN" ITS DECISION. SINCE SOUTH AFRICA IS A UN MEMBER AND WAS REPRESENTED ON THAT UN COMMITTEE, HE ADDED, A SPECIFIC BILATERAL NOTIFICATION WAS SEEN AS UNNECESSARY, THOUGH HE CONSIDERED IT QUITE POSSIBLE THE DECISION MAY NOT HAVE BEEN FOCUSED ON BY APPROPRIATE SOUTH AFRICAN AUTHORITIES. THE OFFICIAL STRESSED THAT THIS APPROVAL WAS A ONE-TIME EXCEPTION MADE IN THE LIGHT ON UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND THAT BRAZIL WILL CONTINUE TO OBSERVE APPLICABLE UN RESTRICTIONS ON DEALING WITH SOUTH AFRICA. HE ALSO DENIED THE STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA IN THE PRESS.

6. COMMENT: THIS RAPID POLICY REVERSAL HAS FURTHER ADDED TO THE GENERAL IMPRESSION--FREQUENTLY NOTED IN PRESS COMMENTARY-- OF OFFICIAL INCONSISTENCY AND CONFUSION IN BRAZIL'S AFRICAN POLICY, AN IMPRESSION INITIALLY NOURISHED BY BRAZIL'S IMMEDIATE RECGNITION OF THE MPLA REGIME IN ANGOLA. BRAZIL'S NEW EMPHASIS ON CLOSE RELATIONS WITH BLACK AFRICA, PARTICULARLY THE FORMER PORTUGUESE COLONIES, HAS FURTHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHARPENED THE DILEMMA OF ITS RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA, WITH WHOM IT HAS IMPORTANT TRADE AND CIVIL AVIATION LINKS AND WITH WHOM IT SHARES IMPORTANT SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. SYMPTOMATIC IS ITAMARATY'S CONTINUING HESITANCE ABOUT NAMING AN AMBASSADOR TO PRETORIA, WHERE BRAZIL HAS BEEN REPRESENTED AT THE CHARGE LEVEL FOR ABOUT TWO YEARS. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED PRIVATELY THAT THEY HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY AWARE THAT AS ITS INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS AND INTERESTS EXPAND, SUCH AS IN AFRICA, THE CHOICES TO BE MADE TEND TO BECOME MORE DIFFICULT AND AMBIGUOUS. THE APPARENT CONFUSION IN ITAMARATY WITH REGARD TO AFRICA MAY WELL BE THE NATURAL BY-PRODUCT OF THIS INITIATION PROCESS. END COMMENT. CRIMMINS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, ATHLETIC PRESENTATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BRASIL00203
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760009-0287
From: BRASILIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760173/aaaacmqh.tel
Line Count: 167
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 CAPE TOWN 1, 76 BRASILIA 4850
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <13 MAY 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PARTICIPATION WITH SOUTH AFRICA IN ATLANTIC REGATTA
TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, SHUM, SF, BR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006